

Abby's Story

Written by her mom, Kristen

Abby was diagnosed with cancer (bilateral retinoblastoma) 3 weeks before her 1st birthday. Within a day we went from planning a 1st birthday party, to scheduling MRI's, EUA's and meeting with our daughter's oncologist to discuss our 11-month-old baby's treatment plan. We learned an entire new language, words no parent should ever have to learn or have in their vocabulary. Her cancer was very advanced, and her oncologist made it very clear that their first job was to save her life and we would worry about remaining vision later. But if cancer wanted a fight, that is exactly what we were prepared to do—fight!

My daughter has endured more than most adults. Countless MRI's, exams of her eyes under anesthesia, systemic chemo, chemo injected directly into her eyes, a radiation plaque stitched on her eye, eyes swollen shut for weeks at a time from treatment and ultimately removal of her eye to prevent the cancer from spreading. Fast forward 5 years, Abby is now in 7 and in 2nd grade and thriving! She loves playing outside, just started softball, loves school, likes arguing with her brother and is the most amazing daughter, sister, granddaughter, cousin and friend.

Cancer has changed my life; she has changed my life. She has taught me to appreciate the little things and to take nothing for granted; because I know that there are families that would do anything for one more of those moments with their child. I know that we are lucky, she is lucky, and I can't wait to see what her future has planned for her!